

Ceremony Hush-Hush

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Powers Gets Secret CIA Medal; Soviets Admit Abel Master Spy

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WASHINGTON — In a secret ceremony, the Central Intelligence Agency last month awarded a secret medal to Francis Gary Powers, the U2 pilot whose crash on May 1, 1960, deep inside the Soviet Union shook the world — and caused a good deal of anguish to the CIA.

The summit meeting in Paris collapsed in the wake of the U2 uproar. The affair chilled East-West relations and ended any meaningful contact between President Eisenhower and then Soviet Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev.

Powers, officially a test pilot in Burbank, Calif. for the Lockheed Aircraft Corp., manufacturer of the U2, received the CIA medal in a ceremony about two weeks ago at the intelligence agency's headquarters in Langley, Va.

Like the ceremony, the medal is secret. Powers is not supposed to tell anybody about it. He is not supposed to wear it.



ABEL



POWERS

In fact, it is sort of an invisible medal.

Certainly CIA isn't talking about it. When a spokesman for the agency was asked to confirm the award, he replied: "No comment at all. He's a former employee. We don't comment on former employees."

However, it was reliably learned that the secret medal was awarded at a ceremony attended by several top officials of the CIA. The award is known by some in the intelligence business as "one of those

under-the-lapel medals."

Powers, now 35, was traded for Soviet master spy Rudolf Ivanovich Abel on Feb. 10, 1962. The exchange, arranged by New York attorney James B. Donovan, took place on a mist-shrouded bridge in Berlin.

By an odd coincidence, the Soviet Union Tuesday made the first admission that Col. Abel had served as a master spy for Russia — and was decorated for his exchange for Powers. A Moscow television program said Abel had served in Soviet intelligence since 1927. It is unusual for the Russians to admit that they have spies, but in recent weeks, this policy seems to have shifted. Soviet agents are being hailed as heroes for home consumption. The telecast told how Abel was defended against a "possible death sentence" by Donovan, but the broadcast never once disclosed that the Soviet spy had done his spying in the U.S. A federal court in New York sentenced Abel to 30 years in 1957.